

making classes at the colleges free to all duly qualified students, a further step of progress to the distinction of a University degree is also possible in terms of similar advantage. Under the regulations for free places in secondary schools and district high schools boys and girls who qualify for junior scholarships, whether they obtain scholarships or not, or who pass the special examinations for free places, become entitled to two years' free tuition, and the privilege is extended with various conditions to a very large group of other aspirants whose claims may in some cases be less convincing. At the end of the period a further free place is obtainable to the age of nineteen by all who succeed in passing the Civil Service Junior Examination within the age of sixteen years, who qualify under a similar condition for Education Board senior scholarships, whether within the age of sixteen years or not, gain a credit pass in the Civil Service Junior Examination, or qualify for matriculation in the University.

Beyond the limits of the secondary school the opportunities given to promising students are now also great. Besides the scholarships offered by the University, there are available four Senior National scholarships in each of the four University districts, four Senior Queen's scholarships, on terms of a similar character in connection with Victoria College, and one or more Taranaki Scholarships under special enactment, making a total of some thirty-six scholarships of very substantial value offered at the close of 1906 on the results of the Junior Scholarship examination of the University.

University bursaries, covering free tuition at University college classes for a period of three years, are also offered out of the public funds to all who obtain credit in the Junior University Scholarship examination, and otherwise possess the qualifications for a National scholarship without obtaining one. With these provisions there can be few indeed entitled to special consideration who are deterred from a University course by the question of the cost of classes.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

At the end of 1906 the secondary schools giving free tuition to duly qualified pupils, and receiving grants therefor under section 87 of the Education Act, numbered twenty-three, as against twenty-one for the previous year. The total number of pupils on the roll of these schools was 3,261, and of this total 2,435 (1,324 boys and 1,111 girls), or 76 per cent. of the roll-number, were given free places under the regulations for free places at a mean average cost to the Treasury of £8 17s. 4d. per pupil; the approximate annual rate as determined on the payments for the last term of the year being £21,240. In 1905 the number of such free pupils was 1,906, and the approximate annual rate £16,414, with a mean capitation of £8 14s. 4d. per pupil. There is thus a very substantial increase to be noted in the grant of free places under this heading, with an approximate increase in capitation payments of £4,826. In addition, free tuition was given to 335 holders of scholarships or exhibitions granted by these schools, by Boards of Education (in some circumstances), or by endowed secondary schools not coming under the conditions, making the total number of free places held at secondary schools 2,770, as against 2,265 for 1905.

Further, however, in reckoning the amount of free secondary education in the colony there has to be included an almost equal number of pupils in attendance at the secondary classes of district high schools. As shown below, there were on the roll of the secondary departments of these schools 2,594 pupils who had passed through the elementary school course and were in receipt of secondary instruction, not differing materially in character from the instruction given in the secondary schools. All but a comparatively small number of these were free pupils within the meaning of the regulations for free places, and a number still nearer in approach to the complete enrolment actually received free tuition at a total cost in salaries of £18,484, and an average annual cost per pupil enrolled of £7 2s. 7d.

The number of district high schools in operation at the end of 1906 was 61, as against 59 for 1905 and 52 for 1904. In the secondary departments of these schools the teachers employed, apart from the principals, who may or may not have taken part in the secondary instruction, but whose added responsibility is in all cases recognised by some increment of salary, numbered 99, and the number of pupils in attendance was 2,594—an increase of 21 teachers, and a decrease of 278 pupils. In 1905 a very substantial rise in the attendance had to be noted; the present move-